THE BANNER SERIES OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES In the Valley of

By Josephine Dodge Daskam

the Shadow

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O BELDEN, pacing the library doggedly, the waiting seemed interminable. the strain unnecessarily prolonged. A half hour ago quick feet had echoed through the upper halls, windows had opened, doors all but slammed, vague whisperings and drawn breaths had hovered imnalpably about the whole place; but now all was utterly quiet. His own regular footfall alone disturbed the unnatural still-

Outside the delicious October sun poured down through in atmosphere of faultless blue. The foliage was thick yet, and the red and yellow leaves danced heartlessly in the wind. A year ago they had gone on a nutting party, and Clarice had raced with the children and picked up more than anybody else. Now-even to think of her brought that faint odor of salts of lavender and beef tea that disheartened him so, somehow, when he sat by her bed conxing her into sipping the stuff.

Some one was coming down the stairs. It was Peter's step-his new one since last Friday, when they had all, it scemed, begun to walk and talk and breathe a little differently. Belden, hurried across the room and caught him at the foot of the steps.

"Well, old man, how goes it?" he demanded, with a letermined cheerfulness.

His brother-in-law stared at him emptily.

"It's tomorrow," he said, gripping the newel post, "to-morrow afternoon. Jameson is commg—they'll do it here. Jameson brings his special nurse for the—the operation, but the other one is due at 5, and you get her just the same. I told Henry to put up the dogcart. I don't know, though --maybe the runabout-no, the tire's loose. Still it might 20---

"For heaven's sake, Peter, don't bother about it! I'll

find a rig. What else does he say?"
"He says there's a good fighting chance-a very good
one. He says her grit alone— Oh. Belden, what shall we

What shall we do?"

Peter sat down heavily on the lowest stair.
"Only last week she was so well—and yet she really sn't. I suppose he knows. But it doesn't seem possible—I can't get it through my head. Poor little Caddy! She never had a sick day in her life. No headaches, like most women; even, no nonsense— Oh, Belden, what shall

"Brace up, Peter-think what a good fighting chance means; think of that! It's not as if Caddy were old; she has that on her side. She's seven years behind me,

Peter scowled. "You're 50, aren't you?"

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"Not a bit. Only 48, and just that, too. Now you go but and get the nurse, and I'll stay here. It'll do you a lot of good. Don't mope around in the house all day-what's the use?"

'I can't leave the house. Honestly, Belden, I can't. I've tried twice, and I just walk right back. It's no good. There's the cart—and you won't be long, will you?" Belden took up the reins with a vague sense of mo-

mentary relief; it was something to do. Under the influence of the fresh autumn air his spirits rose; he found himself enjoying the swift rattle of the cart and the beat of the horse's feet. After all, think of Caddy's grit; think of her fine constitution! A fighting chance—that was little enough to say, though. Why couldn't he have put it a little stronger? Hitchcock was always a pessimist, At the station the usual crowd of well-dressed sub-

urbanites quieted their horses and waited impatiently for the express. As Belden drew up into line, they greeted him with a subdued interest; coachmen left their seats how Mrs. Moore was today, and when could one see her? A sudden mist came over his eyes as he answered briefly, "Very soon-I hope."

The train thundered in; in an incredibly short time

all the guests and commuters were hurried off toward town-where was that nurse?

As his glance wandered through the thinning crowd It was met suddenly and squarely by two brown eyes, set in a fresh, pink face, framed by dark hair lightly sprinkled with gray. The second that he looked into that wom and with gray. The second that he looked into that wom-hurs eyes thught him her character, absolutely, as finally as if he had grown up with her. One could trust her to the last ditch, he thought.

She walked straight up to the cart. "I am the nurse rent for by Dr. Hitchcock. Are you Mr. Moore?"
"I am Mrs. Moore's brother-Mr. Belden," he ex-

"Have you your checks?" "That is all arranged," she returned briefly, "I am all ready. May I ask you to hurry? Dr. Hitchcock was anxious for me to see her before 6, when the fever be-

His nerves were more sharply edged than he knew; an

Instant irritation seized him.

There is plenty of room in the back of the cart." he Insisted, "the express people are very uncertain. Would you not better give me the checks?"

She swung herself up heside him with a firm, assured

motion; for a heavily built woman she carried herself

think not," she said, decidedly; "the man has

started, I am sure. I would rather lose no time."

The bowed and started the horse; he disliked her already. To a deep-scated, involuntary disgust that any woman should have to earn her living, he added a diswoman should have to earn her living, he added a dis-pleased wonder that one should choose this method of soing it. There must be disagreeable details connected with it, embarrassments, absolute indignities—why did they not marry? This woman was good-looking enough. She was very obstinate—almost dictatorial. His idea of womanhood was hopelessly confused with clouds of white tuile, appealing eyes, and a desire for guidance. It was impossible to connect any of these characteristics with the woman beside him.

For a while they drove in silence. Then compunction selzed him, and he remarked on the beauty of the foliage. Bhe assented easily, but seemed no more relieved by the speech than embarrassed by the silence. It was impossible to treat her as a hired servant; one felt a strong perponality in her. Before they reached the house he was learching for conversation that should not bore her.

As they stepped into the wide hall, where he ob-served with a shade of displeasure that her luggage had some before them, Dr. Hitchcock met them

They were up the stairs: Belden stood idly in the hall



His hand slipped to his vest pocket, but he replaced

the cigar uncertainty; it seemed not quite the thing to smoke. Ought he to go to Peter? In his mind's eye he saw

the poor fellow haunting the landing by Caddy's door; he had an idea that in some way he kept things quiet by doing this. And how could one be sure that the troubled

There was a violent ring at the bell, a jarring of wheels on the asphalt. The door flew open, and the pret-tiest little woman imaginable, all fluffy ends and scarlet

flowers and orris scent, rushed toward him.
"Oh, Will! Oh, Will!" she gasped, "Isn't it terrible?
Where is Peter? Can I see her? Oh, Will!"

that with Peter's sister—and she put her head on his shoulder and cried a little, while he patted her and mur-mured, "There, there!"

ant to comfort her-this was what a woman should be. He felt a renewed sense of capacity, of readiners for even the most terrible emergency. He led her gently to the

great cushioned window seat and listened sympathetically

"It will kill Peter-it will kill him! In-in a great m-many ways, you know, Will, Peter isn't so-so c-calm as

Caddy. He is just bound up with her. Suppose- Oh,

are mostly resisting power, you know, and grit, and think what a lot of grit Caddy's got!"
"Oh, I know, I know! Don't you know when the baby

died-that first baby-and s-she was so weak she could hardly speak? 'Never mind, P-Peter, we'll have another!' Oh, dear, she was so pi-plucky, Will! And now to

"Caddy's a brick. She always was."

She sat up, not wholly withdrawing from his arm,

and patted her eyes, breathing brokenly. Little gusts of orris floated toward him.

them away the next, I should send them to grand-mother's, but he won't hear of it."

on the lower landing. She was dressed in cool blue ging-ham; the straps of her white apron marked the firm, broad

voice. "Mrs. Moore would like to see her a moment. Will you come with me?"

"I will come directly," and Sue gathered together her

"She's very good looking—it's a pity her hair is so gray," she breathed in his ear. As the two women stood together a moment on the landing, he realized, not for

the first time, that Sue was a little too small. But he

had never thought her sallow before.

Peter came in by the greenhouse door, walking slowly,

time in his folly, persistently boyish life.

her about the children. Oh my God!"

drew up before the open door.

is hands behind his back. He looked old for the first

done a thing since-since-O Lord, Will, what shall we be

doing this time tomorrow? Where are the children?

Where's Miss Strong? There's a woman for you! Caddy took to her directly. She's there now. She's talking to

Beiden grasped his hand, and they walked silently up and down the hall.

ly. "She will drive me mad. Take care of her, will you? If I could have choked her oft—but when you think she was just like a mother to Cad all these years, what can

you do? She's got a right. You'd think she'd have got

some sense from living with Cad so long. I told Henry to go for her-and there they are," he added, as the cart

Belden went slowly down the steps; he detested Aunt Lucia, and Clarice had always stood between them.

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high seat. Her long crape veil caught in the wheel, and the numberless black and floating ends of her costume wound themselves about him as he bent down to disen-

the bon, I think; but never mind. Can I see her once

Childy was in her grave! She's a long way from it y thank God! Of course, she's conscious, and spunky the—as ever. I don't think you really needed to—"

ways had. Oh, there is Peter! My poor Peter!" she rushed toward him, and Eeiden smiled sardonically as his brother-

"How do you do?" he began, assisting her from the

Oh Wilmot this is a terrible day for us all is it not? Be careful of the hem of that yell, please. When I kissed Clarice good-bye last Christmas I little thought what a

For heaven's sake, Aunt Lucia, anybody would think

Is she conscious? You have muddled

'Aunt Lucia's coming tonight," Peter resumed nervous-

lines of her bust and shoulder.

gloves and handbag.

'Where are the children?" she asked, almost herself now.
"They're here-Peter wants them one minute and sends

A light step sounded on the stair. The nurse appeared

"Is this Mrs. Wylle?" she said in her clear, assured

He choked a little. "I know, I know," he murmured;

"Don't cry, Sue, dear, don't!" he said, soothingly. "She has a good chance-a fine chance, reasty. These things

Instinctively, he took her in his arms-one always did

She was so manifestly comforted, and it was so pleas-

creature wanted company?

to her excited babblings.

"Well, Little Woman, How Goes It?"

derneath are the everlasting arms!' Do you feel that,

"I-I-yes, indeed, Aunt Lucia-you must want a bite of something, I'm sure, driving so far." Peter writhed miserably in Aunt Lucia's crape-and-jet

"Not till I have seen her, Peter. Afterward I shouldn't mind. I have brought such a beautiful address by Bishop Hunter. It was delivered on the occasion of the death of Governor ——, unless I forgot to put it in with my knitted shawl. I believe I did. I will send for it directly. When my dear husband-he was so fond of Clarice-died, I read it more than anything else, except the prayer book,

of course. You will surely find it a help."
"Yes, Aunt Lucia. Your room is ready, and—
"Not till I have seen her, Peter."

"Susy is there now, and Miss Strong says nobody else

this evening. Tomorrow—"

Aunt Lucia drew away.
"Do I understand that Susy Wylle—no relation at all—

is preferred before the only mother Clarice has had for all these years?" Peter wincad. "But you weren't here, Aunt Lucia,"

he argued wearily. "Who is Miss Strong?"
"Here she is!" There was great relief in Peter's voice.
"Miss Strong, my aunt, Mrs. Wetherly."

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"Mrs. Moore sends you her best love, and wants you to get thoroughly rested, so that you can see her the first thing in the morning, Mrs. Wetherly. She says you are not to let them frighten you.

As if by magic, the formidable frown faded from-Aunt Lucia's forchead. She smiled approvingly at the

"Very well. I should like to ask you a few questions— Clarice was always thoughtful."

They moved away together. The two men stared at "How do you account for that?" Belden queried.

"Oh, it's her calm way and her voice. You want to do everything she says. Norah says she's sure Mrs. Moore will get well now, with her to take care of her. By George, Will, if she pulls Caddy through, it'll be worth

th, they always do their best. And they all have that habit, I fancy. It's part of the training."
Peter looked up surprised.
"You don't like her, ch?"

"How absurd. I never considered her particularly." don't care for masculine, dictatorial women, on general

nonsense! I tell you you've taken a grudge against her, and you want to get rid of it as soon as

hotly, but a wave of remorse surged over him at sight of the other man's drawn, nervous face.

"Any one would think we had nothing to do but scrap over a trained nurse," he said lightly. "She's all you say, I haven't a doubt, old man, and if she pulls Caddy

through, I'll sing her praises louder than any of you."

They sat in silence. A burst of laughter from the kitchen garden startled them, and Belden started up as if

'Don't stop 'em-it's the servants. Why shouldn't Don't stop 'em-it's the servants. Why shouldn't they laugh?" said Peter quietly. "I've been thinking it all over. If Caddy-if-if she doesn't get woll, she doesn't want a lot of black and all that. It's bad for the children. And she said the children oughtn't to grow up without a mather. Think of the "

mother-think of that!' "I guess that's all right," said Belden sadly. "Look at A slender, stoop-shouldered lad slouched by the win-

dow, his hands in his pockets, an unlighted cigarette in "Well, well, we all have our load!" Peter's mood had

changed utterly, to the other's astonishment. He seemed gentler, more thoughtful, controlled beyond belief.

"I don't see why we shouldn't smoke," he added, and

they lighted cigars.

"You see, we talked it all over," he said, half to him-self, "and she's so reasonable and calm herself. • • • She says Margaret's going to grow up just like her. That's

a comfort. And there's the boy."

Suddenly the cigar dropped from his lips to the floor.
"Good God, Belden!" he shouted, "I kept thinking sho'd be here, too! I forgot—I— Oh, what rot! Do you think I'll stand it? Do you think I'll put up with it? Why didn't Hitchcock know before? It was his business know! I tell you I'll ruin that man if it takes every

Belden stared at him helplessly. Was this Peter, this red-faced, scowling menace? As he watched him sliently, the nurse came in from the greenhouse. "Mrs. Moore wants to say good-night to you, Mr.

"My dear Wilmot, I prepared Clarice for her confirmation; I dressed her for her wedding, and I was here when the children were born. If you think that I would fall her in this crisis, you have a very poor idea of my character. But then, I am perfectly aware that you al-Moore," she said, her deep, clear voice echoing strangely after the hoarse passion of Peter's rage. "I found these all picked—were you going to take them to fer?" Peter drow a deep breath and put out a shaking hand

like a fool," he half whispered. "I can't get used to this damned sec-saw. First, I'm all ready for it, and then I'm nearly wild. And so it goes-up and down, up and down."

'Mrs. Moore is dong very well-really very well. She was a little excited when Mrs. Wylle was with her, but she is nicely sleepy now. I think it will be better to stay only a moment. She will get a good night's rest tonight, it is so cool. The weather is on our side.

She smiled into his eyes and nodded gravely. He brightened and squared his shoulders. As he went quickly up the stairs, Belden stopped the woman.

"Tell me," he said, authoritatively, "how is my sister, ally? What do you consider her chance?"

She looked him easily in the eyes. "It is impossible asay," she returned gravely. "Your sister is a very

to say," she returned gravely. "Your sister is a very brave, self-possessed woman, and seems to have a good constitution. That is, of course, half the battle. But her case is very complicated, and, until the operation, no one can tell. You may have every confidence in Dr. Jameson. He is a magnificent surgeon." Before her non-committal eyes his own fell baffled. He was more irritated than he cared to own. Could she not see that he was prepared for anything, that his self-control was as great as her own? She treated him like a child; those professional reserves, necessary, doubtless, in the case of Peter and his excitable sister, were wasted on him. Why could she 'I am quite aware of Dr. Jameson's skill," he said

coldly, " but I had hoped that you would find yourself able to break through the professional attitude sufficiently to give me your real opinion, which, of course, you must

She threw him a quick glance. "Ah, my friend," he bught, exultingly, "you have a temper, then!" But in

"I have been here but a short time, you know."
She turned and left the hall, and he, chaling under a

sense of merited rebuke, conscious of a foolish petulance, went discontentedly into the library. He seemed to be continually at fault with Miss Strong, but unable to resist the effort to master her.

The evening was very lonely and still. Peter had gone to his room early, and the children had effaced them-selves; Susy was with them. Aunt Lucia read the "Imi-tation of Christ" by the fire. Belden's mind turned unconsciously to the old days when Caddy and he dreamed out their future in the nursery. It had all come out just as she had planned, except this. Poor little Caddy—a fighting chance! The next morning seemed to fly by them; it was 9

o'clock, 10, 11.
At this hour a feverish activity suddenly spread

At this hour a reverish activity suddenly spread through the house. They met and passed each other, hurrying, troubled, secretive; the servants stumbled and quarreled in their purposeless haste. To Belden, quieting when he could, sternly optimistic everyhere; at heart heavy and uncertain, it seemed that the one anchor of their hopes was this calm, clear-eyed woman in her uniform of authority!

dren, dazed and terrifled, ate and exercised at her command; his own boy, a strange hard look in his furtive eyes, followed her like a dog; and Aunt Lucia submitted with unprecedented meckness to an abrupt curtailment of her interview with Clarice. He himself went into the bed-room for a moment, half uncertain of the reality of the experience. It was absurd to remember that he might never see her, conscious, again-his own fittle Caddy, He sat awkwardly on the side of the bed.

'Well, little woman, how goes it?'
'Queen's taste, Will!"

"Good for you. I'm proud of the Beldens, Caddy-Billy acts like a drum major."

The dear boy," she murmured. Their eyes met, "Look after him," hers said, and his "As long as I live!" He stooped and kissed her lightly. "Mind you look as well as this tomorrow!"

'Oh, I shall be all right. Miss Strong will take care of me. When I think how I have the best of everything-such care—I've been a very happy woman, Will, dear."

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His eyes filled. He threw her a kiss and went out blindly. A hand touched his arm

"You've done her good," said the nurse softly, "You stayed just long enough. She'll take her nap now."

He went heavily into his own room. Below him a little norch led out from the smoking room, and as he sat lost in a miserable reverie, voices rose from it to his

a mother as I'd let her. I did everything but the eigar-ettes, and I meant to tell her I'd do that, too, next month -that's her birthday."

Was this his boy, that pleading, shaken voice? looked out; the lad was fingering Miss Strong's white apron nervously. She leaned over the railing of the little perch, her hand on his shoulder. You tell her about it-I'll never smoke another one.

It was the last thing she asked me."
"I'll tell her—she will be so pleased, I'know. She asked about you yesterday. I'll let you know as soon as I can."

Belden, a little later, hurried downstairs, with a confused idea of thanking her. On the threshold of the li-brary he paused, amazed. Dr. Hitchcock sat before a small green baize table, studying five playing cards, held fan shape in his left hand. Opposite him sat Miss Strong, holding the pack expectantly.

You can give me two, my dear, I think." he said as Belden 'entered. Looking up, he smiled apologetically, "I dare say you are surprised," he suggested; "bu

invaluable person-is kindly assisting me, Did I say three Yes, of course. Thank you. We are playing for beans, only, you see." Belden watched them curiously. She sat as imper-

turbably as by Caddy's bedside, her eyes fixed thoughtfully on her cards.

"-And raise you three," she said. "Five more-you will excuse me, Belden, but your aunt, Mrs. Wetherly, is a somewhat unusually irritating woman. I'll see you, Miss Strong-ah, yes, two pair,

"What has she done?"

"She insists that Mrs. Moore shall not only see Mr. Burchard, to which I have not the least objection, but that he shall hold a communion service, directly, there, Now, if your sister had asked for this herself, it would be another matter; but, unless this is the case, I always regard it as a depressing agent. It is a strain, in any case."

"I think Mrs. Moore will go through with it very easily. Doctor." Miss Strong interposed, elipping the cards into their leather envelope and gathering up the beans. "She will be fresh from her nap, and it will be very short. She has promised Mrs. Wetherly, you know, and it would distress her more to break it-"

"All right, all right. Have it your way. Much obliged."

He took the cards from her and went out.

"My aunt is very trying," Belden began.

"Oh, many people feel so about it," she assured him, "especially high-church people. She only did what she thought right"

He drew a breath of relief.

"You'll see she's not too tired?" he asked, and as he went to luncheon he wondered at the comfort he derived from her mute nod.

He was roused from the table, where the dishes left by them were untouched for the most part, by a disturbance in the hall.

"It's the priest," the waitress murmured, and with a frown he checked her rising tears.

Aunt Lucia bustled through the room

"You must come, Wilmot," she whispered eagerly, "she asked for you. Peter is locked into his room, and neither of the children has been confirmed. Susy, of course, is a Presbyterian. Not that dear Mr. Burchard would object-he is so broad. But you have no excuse. Oh, it is beautiful, Wilmot! She looks so lovely!"

He followed her wearlly. What did it matter? It seemed to him ominous, terrible-but it would please Caddy. She sat propped up in the bed. Her cheeks were erimson, her eyes bright. White chrysanthemums stood in silver vases, candles burned softly on the white-draped dresser. Mr. Burchard, in the hall just beyond, was slipping his surplice over his head. A faint odor of wine

Belden dared not look at her. She was to him, in that moment, mystle, holy, a thing apart. He dropped on his knees beside a silver-white apron, his eyes on the

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The clergyman entered slowly, the service began. It was all a murmured maze to him. Aunt Lucia sobbed quietly beside him, but as he glanced at her he caught a light on her wet, uplifted face that thrilled him strangely. Her deep responses spoke a faith and surety that swallowed for the moment all her little sillnesses and obstinacies.

solemn words grew in intensity, the candles flickered audibly in the secret hush. The clergyman moved toward the bed, and they heard Caddy's breath draw out a deep, shuddering sob; her teeth chattered against

Belden set his jaw; it was cruel, brutal! They were killing her. His clenched fist moved blindly toward his neighbor; he touched her hand and gripped it fiercely. In front of him on the wall hung a large photograph

of Billy's baseball nine in full uniform. He could have drawn it from memory, afterward. Billy, he remembered, was a great catcher. He held hard to that cool, firm

"- be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen." There was a little stir. The hand was drawn "Come, now," whispered Aunt Lucia, and he walked,

come, now. Whispered Aunt Lucia, and he wated, stumbling and stiff from kneeling, from the room. At the door he glanced a second backward, but only Dr. Hitchcock was to be seen, bending over the bed. Miss Strong had already taken away candles and flowers, and Caddy's triple mirror was back on the dresser.

Mr. Burchard, in his long, black cassock, offered his hand conduly.

hand cordially. "I am glad you could be with us, Mr. Belden," he began, but the other broke in:
"If you have tired her, if this—makes a difference—"

he muttered fiercely, "you will have me to settle with.

He hurried down the stairs, his hands still clenched. shortly at each other

From then, the time raced on incredibly. The great surgeon, with his two assistants, was in the hall; he was on the stairs; he was lost to sight. There was a momentary rush and bustle, and closing of a door. Peter came out, whilspering to himself, and disappeared somewhere. The others, clustered in the library, spoke fit-They carried her on a cot into the west room

body murmured close to Belden. It was little Margaret. "I saw her. She waved her hand at me! I threw her a . Miss Strong smiled at me—I love Miss Strong." Aunt Lucia sobbed. Susy bit her lip and played with

Billy's unwilling hand. 'Where's my father? Where's he gone?" he demand-

"Where's my father? Where's he gone?" he demand-ed. "Who's that other woman with the apron?" Miss Strong appeared at the door. "She has taken the ether very well indeed; they are much pleased," she sald softly. They hung on her words; they overwhelmed her with questions. She soothed then like children.

It grew suddenly clear to Belden that Caddy would die. It must be so. He wondered that they had hoped for anything else. He was sorry for them all. He watched indifferently while Miss Strong led the children away -he knew she was taking them to their father. while Aunt Lucia, on her knees, read through streaming eyes from her prayer book, and Susy talked nervously to him, he watched the firm, full figure of the woman pacing up and down the plazza outside, her arm drawn through

"God bless her!" he said aloud.

Afterward, he could never recall the consecutive hap-penings to the end. He saw only separate pictures. In one, a strange young man opened the door and said the words that frightened them with delight,

In another, a drawn, old, white-faced man-surely not Dr. Jameson-leaned weakly in a chair, while a woman handed him a tiny glass of colored liquid.

In yet another, a father hid his face in his little daughter's bosom and sobbed, with shaking shoulders; his tall son smiled-bravely over the bent head

In the last picture he himself bore a part; for when he came more his sky susnicious how classed in the kind

he came upon his shy, suspicious boy clasped in the kind arms of the woman whose brown eyes, once seen, had haunted his thoughts ever since, he gathered them both to him irresistibly. As he laid his cheek against hers, he felt that it was wet with tears.

"It lies with you now," he whispered in her ear, "to give her back to us, well and strong. He says you can.

She drew away from him

She drew away from him.
"I-1 must go. I am so glad-I will do my best," she
answered unsteadily.

He caught her hand. "And afterward?" he repeated,
a growing mastery in his voice. She tried to meet his
avea, but har own fell, conducted.

have been much exasperated, Mr. Belden, and a long perience has taught me that nothing so quickly clears in-law planted a perfunctory kiss on her chin. "This may comfort you, Peter, as it has me so often in such circumstances. So short, so true, so helpful. 'Unmind as throwing a few hands of poker. Miss Strong-an "I don't know what's the matter with me, Will-I talk